Amendments to the Claims:

1-58. (canceled)

59. (currently amended) ~~The~~ An isolated nucleic acid ~~of Claim 59 encoding a polypeptide~~ having at least 85% nucleic acid sequence identity to:

~~(a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523;~~

~~(b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523, lacking its associated signal peptide;~~

~~(c)~~ the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522,[[;]]

~~(d) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522; or~~

~~(e) the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487,~~

wherein the isolated nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide that is a mitogen for inner ear supporting cells.

60. (currently amended) ~~The~~ An isolated nucleic acid ~~of Claim 58 encoding a polypeptide~~ having at least 90% nucleic acid sequence identity to:

~~(a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523;~~

~~(b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523, lacking its associated signal peptide;~~

[[(c)]] (a) the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522;

[[(d)]] (b) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522; or

[[(e)]] (c) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487,

wherein the isolated nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide that is a mitogen for inner ear supporting cells.

61. (currently amended) ~~The~~ An isolated nucleic acid ~~of Claim 58~~ encoding a polypeptide having at least 95% sequence identity to:

(a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523;

~~(b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523, lacking its associated signal peptide;~~

~~(c) the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522;~~

[[(d)]] (b) the amino acid sequence of the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522; or

[[(e)]] (c) the amino acid sequence of the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487,

wherein the isolated nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide that is a mitogen for inner ear supporting cells.

62. (currently amended) ~~The~~ An isolated nucleic acid ~~of Claim 58~~ encoding a polypeptide having at least 99% sequence identity to:

(a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523;

(b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523, lacking its associated signal peptide;

~~(c) the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522;~~

[[(d)]] (c) the amino acid sequence of the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522; or

[[(e)]] (d) the amino acid sequence of the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487,

wherein the isolated nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide that is a mitogen for inner ear supporting cells.

63. (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid comprising:

(a) a nucleic acid sequence encoding ~~the amino acid sequence of~~ the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523;

(b) a nucleic acid sequence encoding ~~the amino acid sequence of~~ the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523, lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522;

(d) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522; or

(e) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487.

64. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 63 comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding ~~the amino acid sequence of~~ the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523.

65. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 63 comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding ~~the amino acid sequence of~~ the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523, lacking its associated signal peptide.

66. (canceled)

67. (canceled)

68. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 63 comprising the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522.

69. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 63 comprising the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522.

70. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 63 comprising the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487.

71. (cancel)

72. (cancel)

73. (cancel)

74. (currently amended) A vector comprising the nucleic acid of Claim 59, 60, 61 or 62 ~~78 or 82~~.

75. (previously presented) The vector of Claim 74, wherein said nucleic acid is operably linked to control sequences recognized by a host cell transformed with the vector.

76. (previously presented) An isolated host cell comprising the vector of Claim 74.

77. (previously presented) The host cell of Claim 76, wherein said cell is a CHO cell, an *E. coli* or a yeast cell.

78-85. (canceled)

86. (new) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 60 having at least 95% nucleic acid sequence identity to:

(a) the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522;

(b) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522; or

(c) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487,

wherein the isolated nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide that is a mitogen for inner ear supporting cells.

87. (new) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 60 having at least 99% nucleic acid sequence identity to:

(a) the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522;

(b) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522; or

(c) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487,

wherein the isolated nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide that is a mitogen for inner ear supporting cells.